

February 1, 1996. These procedures and guidelines, designed to comply with the 1992 amendments to Ex-Im Bank's charter, are not subject to notice and comment requirements or to publication in the **Federal Register** pursuant to 5 U.S.C. (a)(2), 553(b)(A), and 553(d)(2). Copies may be obtained by written request from Ex-Im Bank's Engineering and Environment Division, 811 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20571.

#### List of Subjects in 12 CFR Part 409

Environmental impact statements, Foreign Relations.

Accordingly, under the authority of section 106 of the Export Enhancement Act (12 U.S.C. 635i-5) 12 CFR part 409 is removed.

Dated: February 7, 1995.

**Carol F. Lee,**

*General Counsel, Export-Import Bank of the United States.*

[FR Doc. 95-3449 Filed 2-17-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6690-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-NM-27-AD; Amendment 39-9134; AD 95-02-15]

#### Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100 Series Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment supersedes an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747-100 series airplanes, that currently requires repetitive inspections to detect cracking of the wing front spar web above engine numbers 2 and 3, and repair, if necessary. This amendment requires repetitive inspections to detect cracks in the web and cracked or broken fasteners in an area beyond that specified in the existing AD. This amendment also provides an optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This amendment is prompted by reports of broken fasteners and cracking of the web common to the upper and lower chords in an area outside the inspection zone specified in the existing AD. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent fuel leakage onto an engine and a resultant fire due to cracking or broken fasteners in the wing front spar.

**DATES:** Effective March 23, 1995.

The incorporation by reference of Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266,

dated June 6, 1991, as listed in the regulations, was approved previously by the Director of the Federal Register as of May 4, 1992 (57 FR 10415, March 26, 1992).

The incorporation by reference of certain other publications, as listed in the regulations, is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 23, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tim Backman, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (206) 227-2776; fax (206) 227-1181.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) by superseding AD 92-07-11, amendment 39-8207 (57 FR 10415, March 26, 1992), which is applicable to certain Boeing Model 747-100 series airplanes, was published in the **Federal Register** on August 23, 1994 (59 FR 43304). The action proposed to require repetitive detailed visual and ultrasonic inspections to detect cracks in an area beyond that specified in the existing AD; repetitive ultrasonic inspections of the fasteners in the web-to-chords, web-to-stiffeners, and web-to-rib posts to detect cracked or broken fasteners between front spar stations (FSS) 570 and 684; and oversizing the fastener holes, performing an eddy current inspection to detect cracking of the fastener holes, and replacing cracked fasteners with oversized fasteners, if necessary.

#### Discussion of Comments Received

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

One commenter supports the proposed rule.

Two commenters request that the initial inspection threshold specified in paragraph (b) of the proposal be extended from 1,000 to 2,000 flight cycles (after the immediately preceding

inspection) to be consistent with the recommendations of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994, which is referenced in the proposal as the appropriate source of service information. The FAA concurs. The FAA finds that such an extension of the inspection threshold will not adversely affect safety. Therefore, the final rule has been revised accordingly. In addition, the FAA has revised the "grace period" of 6 months (after the effective date of the AD), as specified in proposed paragraph (b), to 9 months in order to correspond with the recommendations of the service bulletin.

The Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, on behalf of one of its members, requests that the FAA delay issuance of this AD until the next revision of Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266 is issued. (Revision 3 of that service bulletin is referenced in the proposal as the appropriate source of service information.) The commenter notes that, in accomplishing the proposed inspection/modification, many of the fastener holes required oversizing beyond the criteria described in the referenced version of service bulletin. The commenter also states that it has found several cracked rivets that had not been identified using the ultrasonic inspection technique recommended in that service bulletin. The commenter indicates that Boeing has advised that it is considering issuance of a revision to the service bulletin to address this concern.

The FAA does not concur with the commenter's request to delay issuance of the final rule. Since the issuance of the proposal, Boeing has issued Revision 4 of Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated November 3, 1994. This revision is essentially the same as the previous version, but specifies the locations of certain fasteners that must be inspected using ultrasonic techniques. The locations of these fasteners are in the web-to-chords, and in the top two and bottom two rows in the web-to-stiffeners and web-to-rib posts of the wing front spar. Paragraphs (b)(3) and (c)(3) of the final rule have been revised to specify this.

Revision 4 of the service bulletin also updates certain information concerning parts and materials, adds a reference to an ultrasonic testing procedure in the Nondestructive Test Manual, provides an additional inspection method for detecting cracks inside the fuel tank, and includes an additional method of removing fasteners for inspection. The final rule has been revised to cite the latest revision of the service bulletin as

an additional source of service information.

In addition, paragraphs (b)(1) and (c)(1) of the final rule have been clarified to indicate that the detailed visual inspections of the wing front spar chords, stiffeners, and rib posts between the fastener heads are to be accomplished between FSS 570 to FSS 684, as specified in Revisions 3 and 4 of the service bulletin.

The FAA points out that Revision 4 of the service bulletin does not recommend increasing the oversize limits of the fastener holes, as mentioned by the commenter. Boeing has advised the FAA that a review of this issue is currently under way. Although this review is not yet completed, preliminary results indicate that only certain holes may be oversized beyond the limits specified in Revision 4 of the service bulletin.

In addition, Boeing indicates that it has examined the cracked rivets discussed by the commenter. Four of the six rivets submitted to Boeing were not cracked. The other two rivets had small cracks that were not detectable by the proposed ultrasonic inspection method. Boeing indicates that the currently recommended ultrasonic inspection method is not sensitive enough to detect small cracks in the rivets; however, it is effective in detecting cracks that penetrate/propagate more than halfway through the rivet, which does provide a safety benefit. Boeing is currently working to refine the ultrasonic inspection method to improve the detectability of small rivet cracks.

In light of the above, the FAA finds that to delay issuance of this final rule would be inappropriate, since an unsafe condition exists and the actions required by this AD must be accomplished to ensure continued safety. Repair of fastener holes with cracks that cannot be removed by oversizing the fastener holes must be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA, as specified in paragraph (d) of the final rule. The FAA may consider additional rulemaking once the review discussed previously is completed.

#### **Discussion of Other Changes Made to the Final Rule**

The applicability statement contained in the proposal referenced airplanes listed in Revision 3 of the service bulletin. Since Revision 4 of the service bulletin contains the same effectivity listing as that specified in Revision 3, the FAA has revised the applicability statement of the final rule to specify that this AD applies to airplanes listed in Revision 4 of the service bulletin.

Paragraph (b)(1) of the final rule has been revised to clarify the FAA's intent that the purpose of the detailed visual inspection is to detect cracking.

As a result of recent communications with the ATA, the FAA has learned that, in general, some operators may misunderstand the legal effect of AD's on airplanes that are identified in the applicability provision of the AD, but that have been altered or repaired in the area addressed by the AD. The FAA points out that all airplanes identified in the applicability provision of an AD are legally subject to the AD. If an airplane has been altered or repaired in the affected area in such a way as to affect compliance with the AD, the owner or operator is required to obtain FAA approval for an alternative method of compliance with the AD, in accordance with the paragraph of each AD that provides for such approvals. A note has been added to this final rule to clarify this requirement.

Additionally, the FAA has recently reviewed the figures it has used over the past several years in calculating the economic impact of AD activity. In order to account for various inflationary costs in the airline industry, the FAA has determined that it is necessary to increase the labor rate used in these calculations from \$55 per work hour to \$60 per work hour. The economic impact information, below, has been revised to reflect this increase in the specified hourly labor rate.

In addition, Boeing has included in Revision 4 of the service bulletin prices for kits necessary to accomplish the optional terminating action. Accordingly, the economic impact information, below, has been revised to reflect these costs, should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating action.

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the changes previously described. The FAA has determined that these changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

#### **Economic Impact**

There are approximately 190 Model 747-100 series airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 95 airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD.

The inspections that are required previously by AD 92-07-11, and retained in this AD, take approximately 16 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of

\$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of that inspection requirement on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$91,200, or \$960 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The FAA estimates that it will take approximately 54 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required inspections of the expanded area specified in this AD, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the future total cost impact of the inspection requirement of the expanded area on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$307,800, or \$3,240 per airplane.

Based on these figures, the total cost impact of this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$399,000, or \$4,200 per airplane.

The total cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating action (fastener replacement between FSS 570 and FSS 684) that is provided by this AD action, it will take approximately 306 work hours to accomplish it, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. The cost of required parts will be approximately \$15,478. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the optional terminating action will be \$33,838 per airplane.

#### **Regulatory Impact**

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules

Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

### List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

### Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

### PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. App. 1354(a), 1421 and 1423; 49 U.S.C. 106(g); and 14 CFR 11.89.

#### § 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by removing amendment 39-8207 (57 FR 10415, March 26, 1992), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), amendment 39-9134, to read as follows:

#### 95-02-15 Boeing: Amendment 39-9134.

Docket 94-NM-27-AD. Supersedes AD 92-07-11, Amendment 39-8207.

**Applicability:** Model 747-100 series airplanes; as listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994; certificated in any category.

**Note 1:** This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must use the authority provided in paragraph (f) to request approval from the FAA. This approval may address either no action, if the current configuration eliminates the unsafe condition; or different actions necessary to address the unsafe condition described in this AD. Such a request should include an assessment of the effect of the changed configuration on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD. In no case does the presence of any modification, alteration, or repair remove any airplane from the applicability of this AD.

**Compliance:** Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent fuel leakage onto an engine and a resultant fire, accomplish the following:

#### Restatement of Actions Required by AD 92-07-11, Amendment 39-8207:

(a) For airplanes listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated June 6, 1991, on which the optional terminating action (fastener replacement) specified in the original issue, dated June 6, 1991; Revision 1, dated May 21, 1992; or Revision 2, dated June 10, 1993; of the service bulletin has not

been accomplished: Perform a visual inspection and an ultrasonic inspection to detect cracks of the wing front spar web between front spar station (FSS) 636 and FSS 675 in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated June 6, 1991; Revision 1, dated May 21, 1992; Revision 2, dated June 10, 1993; or Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; or Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994; at the time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) of this AD, as applicable. Repeat these inspections thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 flight cycles until the inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD are accomplished.

(1) For airplanes that have accumulated more than 20,000 total flight cycles as of May 4, 1992 (the effective date of AD 92-07-11, amendment 39-8207): Inspect within 6 months after May 4, 1992.

(2) For airplanes that have accumulated between 15,000 and 20,000 total flight cycles as of May 4, 1992: Inspect within 15 months after May 4, 1992.

(3) For airplanes that have accumulated less than 15,000 total flight cycles as of May 4, 1992: Inspect within 15 months after accumulating 15,000 total flight cycles.

#### New Actions Required by This AD

(b) For airplanes on which the terminating action (fastener replacement) specified in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated June 6, 1991; Revision 1, dated May 21, 1992; or Revision 2, dated June 10, 1993; has not been accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 13,000 total flight cycles, or within 9 months after the effective date of this AD, or within 2,000 flight cycles after the immediately preceding inspection accomplished in accordance with paragraph (a) of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish the inspections specified in paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), and (b)(3) of this AD in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; or Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994. Repeat these inspections thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 flight cycles. Accomplishment of these inspections terminates the inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD. After the effective date of this AD, the inspections required by this paragraph shall be accomplished only in accordance with Revision 3 or 4 of the service bulletin.

(1) Perform a detailed visual inspection to detect cracking of the wing front spar chords, stiffeners, and rib posts between the fastener heads between FSS 570 and FSS 684; and

(2) Perform an ultrasonic inspection of the web under the upper and lower chord footprints to detect cracking of the wing front spar web between FSS 570 and FSS 684; and

(3) Perform an ultrasonic inspection of the fasteners in the web-to-chords, and of the fasteners in the top two and bottom two rows in the web-to-stiffeners and web-to-rib posts of the wing front spar to detect cracked or broken fasteners between FSS 570 and FSS 684.

(c) For airplanes on which the terminating action (fastener replacement) specified in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated June 6, 1991; Revision 1, dated May 21, 1992; or Revision 2, dated June 10, 1993; has been

accomplished: Within 18 months after accomplishing the terminating action specified in the original issue, Revision 1, or Revision 2 of the service bulletin, or within 9 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish the inspections specified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; or Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994. Repeat these inspections thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 flight cycles. After the effective date of this AD, the inspections required by this paragraph shall be accomplished only in accordance with Revision 3 or 4 of the service bulletin.

(1) Perform a detailed visual inspection of the wing front spar chords, stiffeners, and rib posts between the fastener heads between FSS 570 and FSS 684; and

(2) Perform an ultrasonic inspection of the web under the upper and lower chord footprints to detect cracking of the wing front spar web between FSS 570 and FSS 636 and between FSS 675 and FSS 684; and

(3) Perform an ultrasonic inspection of the fasteners in the web-to-chords, and of the fasteners in the top two rows and bottom two rows in the web-to-stiffeners and web-to-rib posts of the wing front spar to detect cracked or broken fasteners between FSS 570 and FSS 636 and between FSS 675 and 684.

(d) If any crack in the web or any cracked or broken fastener is found during any inspection required by this AD, prior to further flight, oversize the fastener hole, perform an eddy current inspection to detect cracks in the fastener hole, and replace the fastener with an oversized fastener, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; or Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994. Thereafter, continue to inspect the remaining fasteners in accordance with paragraph (b) or (c) of this AD, as applicable, until the terminating action specified in paragraph (e) of this AD is accomplished. If any crack is found that cannot be removed by oversizing the fastener hole, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(e) Replacement of the fasteners in the web-to-chords and of the fasteners in the web-to-stiffeners and web-to-rib posts, as specified in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; or Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994; with oversized fasteners on each wing spar in accordance with the service bulletin constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) and (c) of this AD.

(f) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of

compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

(g) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(h) Certain inspections shall be done in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, dated June 6, 1991, as indicated. The incorporation by reference of this document was approved previously by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51 as of May 4, 1992 (57 FR 10415, March 26, 1992). Other inspections and replacement actions, as indicated, shall be done in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 1, dated May 21, 1992; Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 2, dated June 10, 1993; Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 3, dated March 31, 1994; and Boeing Service Bulletin 747-57A2266, Revision 4, dated November 3, 1994. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(i) This amendment becomes effective on March 23, 1995.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 24, 1995.

**Darrell M. Pederson,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 95-2173 Filed 2-17-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

## 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 95-NM-01-AD; Amendment 39-9152; AD 95-02-51]

### **Airworthiness Directives; Aerospatiale Model ATR-42 and ATR-72 Series Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This document publishes in the **Federal Register** an amendment adopting Airworthiness Directive (AD) T95-02-51 that was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of Aerospatiale Model ATR-42 and ATR-72 series airplanes by individual telegrams. Unless modifications are accomplished or alternative procedures and training are adopted, this AD prohibits operation of the airplane in

certain icing conditions, and requires restrictions on the use of the autopilot in certain conditions. This AD also provides for an optional terminating action, which, if accomplished, would terminate the requirements of this AD. This amendment is prompted by an FAA determination that, during flight in freezing rain or freezing drizzle with the flaps set at the 15-degree position, a ridge of ice can form on the wing. This ridge can interrupt the airflow over the ailerons when the flaps are retracted to the zero-degree position, and can cause an aileron deflection and resultant unusual control forces. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent a roll upset from which the flight crew may be unable to recover.

**DATES:** Effective March 8, 1995, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by telegraphic AD T95-02-51, issued January 11, 1995, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 8, 1995.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before April 24, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 95-NM-01-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

The applicable service information may be obtained from Aerospatiale, 316 Route de Bayonne, 31060 Toulouse, Cedex 03, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sam Grober or Gary Lium, Aerospace Engineers, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (206) 227-1187 or (206) 227-1112; fax (206) 227-1320.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On December 9, 1994, the FAA issued telegraphic airworthiness directive (AD) T94-25-51, to address an unsafe condition related to potential hazards associated with operation of Aerospatiale Model ATR-42 and ATR-72 series airplanes in icing conditions. That AD requires an operational limitation that prohibits operation of the

airplane when icing conditions [as defined in the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM)] are forecast or reported. It also requires restrictions on the use of the autopilot in inadvertent icing encounters, when the airplane is operated in moderate or greater turbulence, or whenever any unusual lateral trim situation is observed.

That AD action was prompted by data obtained following an accident involving a Model ATR-72 series airplane that occurred when the airplane was enroute from Indianapolis to Chicago. The accident occurred during the initial descent for approach to Chicago. The airplane had been in a holding pattern for more than 30 minutes with flaps at the 15-degree position, and there were icing conditions and turbulence reported in the area.

Although the official cause of the accident has not been determined, preliminary information from the accident investigation indicates that, immediately after the autopilot disconnected, at an indicated airspeed of approximately 185 knots, the ailerons abruptly deflected in the right-wing-down direction, and the airplane entered an abrupt roll to the right, which was not corrected before the airplane impacted the ground.

Prior to the issuance of AD T94-25-51, ATR conducted certain wind tunnel and ground tests in Toulouse, France. Following these tests, ATR contracted with the United States Air Force to conduct a series of flight tests at Edwards Air Force Base, California. The test program was developed in conjunction with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States Air Force, representatives from the FAA, and the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France.

During these tests, a Model ATR-72 series airplane flew in close formation behind an "icing tanker," which is a specially modified aerial refueling airplane designed to create icing conditions by spraying supercooled water droplets on a test airplane during flight. Appendix C of part 25 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 25) defines droplet diameters, liquid water content, temperature, and horizontal extent parameters for testing leading to approval of flight in icing conditions. Water droplet diameters specified in part 25 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) for certification of transport category airplanes, and larger droplets well outside the diameters specified in part